

## Current Economic Programs Printed Survey Results: by the *Service Annual Survey* Statistics Users Respondent Base

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U.S. Census Bureau  
Current Economic Statistics User Survey

OMB CQM-26 (Rev.5/5/98)

### I. DATA CONTENT

Your answers identifying the survey data you use will help us understand our users' patterns of data use.

1. Which Current Economic Statistics from the Census Bureau do you use? (Mark all that apply.)

#### (1) Monthly

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0.0%;	0	None
74.6%;	85	Retail Sales
60.5%;	69	Wholesale Trade
63.2%;	72	Manufacturing/Trade Inventory/Sales
56.1%;	64	Housing Starts
57.9%;	66	Building Permits
52.6%;	60	New Home Sales
52.6%;	60	Value of New Construction Put in Place
36.8%;	42	Housing Completions
36.8%;	42	Expenditures for Residential Improvements
44.7%;	51	New Residential Construction
21.1%;	24	New Mobile Home Placements
55.3%;	63	Monthly Imports and Exports
70.2%;	80	Current Industrial Reports
61.4%;	70	Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, Orders

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Replies 114; Forms 127

#### (2) Quarterly

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55.7%;	44	Quarterly Financial Report
86.1%;	68	Current Industrial Reports
6.3%;	5	Federal Assistance Awards Data System
24.1%;	19	Quarterly Tax Survey
11.4%;	9	Quarterly Public Employee Retirement

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Replies 79; Forms 127

#### (3) Annual

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84.3%;	107	Annual Retail Trade
78.0%;	99	Annual (Wholesale) Trade
61.4%;	78	Annual Survey of Communications
65.4%;	83	Transportation Annual Survey
100.0%;	127	Service Annual Survey
76.4%;	97	County Business Patterns

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44.1%;	56	ZIP Code Business Patterns
57.5%;	73	Statistics of U.S. Businesses
35.4%;	45	Characteristics of New Housing
48.0%;	61	Annual Building Permits
32.3%;	41	New Residential Construction in Selected Metropolitan Areas
48.8%;	62	Annual Capital Expenditures
89.0%;	113	Annual Survey of Manufactures
70.9%;	90	Current Industrial Reports
35.4%;	45	Research and Development Survey
42.5%;	54	Plant Capacity Utilization
18.9%;	24	Education Finance Survey
30.7%;	39	State Tax Collection Survey
11.8%;	15	Annual Public Employee Retirement
25.2%;	32	Annual Survey of Public Employment
24.4%;	31	Consolidated Federal Funds Report
40.2%;	51	State Government Finances
58.3%;	74	Annual Imports and Exports

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Replies 127; Forms 127

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## II. DATA DELIVERY

The Census Bureau is considering use of the Internet as the primary method of data delivery. By completing the following questions, you will help us retain the most essential delivery formats and design the best possible data delivery service.

(4) 2. How do you receive current economic data now? (Mark all that apply.)

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88.9%;	112	Printed Publications	19.0%;	24	FAX
80.2%;	101	World Wide Web (Internet)	15.9%;	20	Direct (E-mail) delivery
52.4%;	66	CD-ROMs	0.8%;	1	Regular mail
26.2%;	33	Diskettes	5.6%;	7	Other

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Replies 126; Forms 127

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- visit to Census release library and requests to commerce library.
  - Library
  - Check values by telephone
  - also use microfiche in some cases.
  - Bulletin Board Commerce Dept.
  - hard copy computer run
  - Overnight Delivery of NIA data
  - CD Rom & Publications in Library
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(5) 3. What format do you PREFER when downloading data for further manipulation? (Mark all that apply.)

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70.9%;	83	Spreadsheet (e.g., wkl, xls, etc...)
38.5%;	45	Database (e.g., dbf, mdb, etc...)
33.3%;	39	ASCII delimited
17.9%;	21	ASCII flat files
15.4%;	18	Retrieve from print or screen and enter manually
10.3%;	12	Do not manipulate data
1.7%;	2	Other

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Replies 117; Forms 127

- Sas data sets
- pdf

4. What capabilities do you want on the Census Internet site? (For each line, indicate the degree of your preferences, from 5 [high] to 1 [low].)

(6) a. Direct (E-mail) delivery:

38.5%;	40	5	18.3%;	19	3	9.6%;	10	1
15.4%;	16	4	8.7%;	9	2	9.6%;	10	Don't know

Replies 104; Forms 127

(7) b. E-mail notification:

40.6%;	43	5	22.6%;	24	3	6.6%;	7	1
14.2%;	15	4	9.4%;	10	2	6.6%;	7	Don't know

Replies 106; Forms 127

(8) c. Retrieve/display to screen:

66.1%;	72	5	11.9%;	13	3	4.6%;	5	1
11.0%;	12	4	0.0%;	0	2	6.4%;	7	Don't know

Replies 109; Forms 127

(9) d. Search:

74.1%;	83	5	8.9%;	10	3	0.0%;	0	1
12.5%;	14	4	0.9%;	1	2	3.6%;	4	Don't know

Replies 112; Forms 127

(10) e. Download complete data sets:

76.8%;	86	5	7.1%;	8	3	1.8%;	2	1
9.8%;	11	4	0.9%;	1	2	3.6%;	4	Don't know

Replies 112; Forms 127

(11) f. Download selected data:

79.6%;	90	5	4.4%;	5	3	0.9%;	1	1
9.7%;	11	4	2.7%;	3	2	2.7%;	3	Don't know

Replies 113; Forms 127

(12) g. Software help/tutorials:

25.5%;	25	5	28.6%;	28	3	7.1%;	7	1
21.4%;	21	4	10.2%;	10	2	7.1%;	7	Don't know

Replies 98; Forms 127

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(13) h. Publication-quality printing:

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39.6%;	42	5	19.8%;	21	3	8.5%;	9	1
21.7%;	23	4	9.4%;	10	2	0.9%;	1	Don't know

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Replies 106; Forms 127

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(14) i. Charts and graphs:

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30.1%;	31	5	18.4%;	19	3	10.7%;	11	1
22.3%;	23	4	16.5%;	17	2	1.9%;	2	Don't know

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Replies 103; Forms 127

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(15) j. Geographic maps:

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31.4%;	32	5	13.7%;	14	3	14.7%;	15	1
19.6%;	20	4	15.7%;	16	2	4.9%;	5	Don't know

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Replies 102; Forms 127

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(16) k. Other, please specify:

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80.0%;	8	electronic bulletin board	20.0%;	2	Other
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Replies 10; Forms 127

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- Publications like QFR to be in spreadsheet format or mdb for easy data manipulation after downloading.
  - Update full report at release time
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(17) l. Electronic Bulletin Board (To collect write-ins)

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0.0%;	0	5	0.0%;	0	3	0.0%;	0	1
0.0%;	0	4	100.0%;	1	2	0.0%;	0	Don't know

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Replies 1; Forms 127

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### III. DATA USAGE

Your answers describing how you use the data will help us design the most effective Current Economic Statistics retrieval tool.

(18) 5. Do you combine/compare/merge data from more than one source listed in Question 1?

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26.2%;	32	No	73.8%;	90	Yes
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Replies 122; Forms 127

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(19) 6. What time periods do you consider when using these data? (Mark X all that apply.)

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68.6%;	83	5+ years	45.5%;	55	trends up to 1 year
67.8%;	82	trends up to 5 years	0.0%;	0	Other
52.1%;	63	latest 1 or 2 periods			

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Replies 121; Forms 127

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(20) 7. How do you use the data? (Mark all that apply.)

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57.0%;	69	Create value-added products/services
53.7%;	65	Perform patron/client inquiries
22.3%;	27	Republish in newspaper/journal
19.0%;	23	Inform marketing decisions
16.5%;	20	Store reports/printouts for archival purposes
14.0%;	17	Inform investment decisions
10.7%;	13	Locate new sites
0.0%;	0	Other

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Replies 121; Forms 127

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- [none]
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(21) 8. What explanatory information do you consult when using these data? (Mark all that apply.)

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82.4%;	98	Definition of terms
68.1%;	81	Narrative text describing survey results
64.7%;	77	Sampling and estimation methodology
48.7%;	58	Survey design
5.9%;	7	None
2.5%;	3	Other

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Replies 119; Forms 127

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- Direct contact with Census analysts
  - Comparisons to earlier surveys and/or similar data from other agencies--e.g. census to BEA in one estimates.
  - Census Bureau Staff
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(22) 9. Do you have any pressing data or information needs that are not currently being met?

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- You should have a central source for sales for all SIC codes. The data could be more timely.
- We are very much interested in unadjusted counterparts of tables 7 & 8 of the FT900 release being made available on internet on the day of release. Publications like QFR also need to be made available in spreadsheet or mdb for us to further manipulate data.
- Non-residential building permit data.
- Yes--Need more timely and more defined (i.e. 4-digit SIC code) SUB-NATIONAL data.
- Print publications no longer available, yet there is no notice that the print publication will no longer exist. Impossible to find the exact publication on the Internet so clients can compare and update printed data. Current information available but how long will older information remain available?
- Foreign trade - exports & imports - by 4-digit (data that had been available in "Trades Employment") - without SIC (& soon NAIC), cannot compare trade with domestic activity.
- Info at small geographic levels, villages, small cities, townships
- Selected salaries for selected industries & occupations.
- MCD Business Patterns, Massachusetts is doing away with county government, MCD income estimates.
- Non-residential building permits--number by type of building.
- The availability of Residential and Commercial Building Permit Data.
- We use and would like to continue to use retail sales by county data and the merchandise line sales data.
- Int'l trade data on internet are inadequate. Only press releases are there. When data are revised, if data are not in the press release, there is no way to get the revisions (ex: monthly data from exhibits 6&7 of FT900).
- Number of Mobile Homes & Value of, by state, on a monthly basis. (Currently only published annually) -- Also, by county, if possible.

- 1) Monthly building permits by stats. 2) Retail sales by states & MSA's.
- Non-residential building permits data nad value of new non-residential construction part in place.
- We are always looking for very current information. We normally use Census dat for historical trends and background.
- Resume geographic estimates of retail sales.
- Current employment by #'s of employees, by SIC, by MCD, by specific employer ID only.
- Current input-output reports; 5 yrs. is too old!
- YES! Bring back non-residential state/local permits authorized! This was a severe loss for interpreting local economic trends. Also, more geographic detail, more frequently.
- Commodity flows data with 3 digit SIC value of shipments between states-The state to state flows.
- Seasonal Population - estimates. More information on affordable housing-market.
- Monthly Retail Sales for U.S. Metropolitan Areas.
- Downloadable ASM files in xls format would be great.
- Yes. I have been looking for cost dat for pollution data for different pollutants by categories for the last years from 1993 +, but could not.
- More frequent substate mtg. stats (annual survey is state wide only)
- Household Expenditure Data at State Level.
- Pollution abatement expenditures by SIC
- We want SIC data at the product level by region. Please make every effort to provide locational tags to Canadian & Mexican data. Full country data profiles are not sufficient.
- Would like Government Finance series in print form.
- Non-residential Building permits.
- Place and regional economic data sets in relation to population/race trends.
- Service Data on an manual/quarterly/monthly basis by 2,3, & 4-digit SIC!
- Economic data for lower half and upper half of the work force.
- Imports and exports by 4-digit SIC. Very important--in print. Publication form--quarterly.
- Geographic Area Retail Sales
- MSA retail sales
- Monthly service sector sales counterpart data st to retail, wholesale, and manufacturing shipments.
- Non-residential construction data outside California! Bring it back!
- We have a need for long historical time series and for long-term forecasts.
- Information about how well the ACES programs capture new business formation and business deaths.
- Commercial Building Permits County level on a timely basis.

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#### IV. INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

We will soon begin restructuring the Current Economic Surveys based on the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Your answers will help us ensure that these surveys continue to provide the economic information needed by markets, policy makers, and business people. For more information on NAICS, see the Bureau's web site: <http://www.census.gov/NAICS>.

(24) 10. At what levels of detail do you MOST FREQUENTLY USE industry data classified by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)? (Mark all that apply.)

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79.5%;	97 4-digit industries (or maximum detail I can get)
53.3%;	65 2-digit major groups
48.4%;	59 Sector totals (SIC division); e.g., Manufacturing or Retail Trade
46.7%;	57 3-digit industry groups
1.6%;	2 NA (don't use SIC-based data)
4.9%;	6 Other

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Replies 122; Forms 127

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- digit SIC product codes
- Greater detail when available
- sub-groups within 4-digit

- Name of Industry & # of employees
- Would like to have 6 or 7 digit SIC
- Whatever is available below 4-digits

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(25) 11. Were you aware that the SIC system is being replaced by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)?

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12.0%; 15 I was unaware of this  
 27.2%; 34 I am partially aware, but lack details  
 60.8%; 76 I am aware and understand some implications

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Replies 125; Forms 127

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12. Would you like to receive more information about NAICS?

(26) Yes, please send me - (Mark all that apply)

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85.2%;	69	A brochure that explains NAICS	40.7%;	33	Conference announcements
75.3%;	61	NAICS implementation plans	2.5%;	2	Other

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Replies 81; Forms 127

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- Send info on NAICS comparability with existing SIC data.
  - I am awaiting CD-ROM!
- 

(27) No Thanks -

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59.2%; 29 I will check the Census Bureau's web site ([www.census.gov/naics](http://www.census.gov/naics))  
 40.8%; 20 I don't need more information about NAICS

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Replies 49; Forms 127

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## V. USER PROFILE

Please tell us about yourself so we may serve you better.

(28) 13. Type of organization.

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32.0%;	40	Government	3.2%;	4	Individual
28.8%;	36	Business	3.2%;	4	Media
22.4%;	28	Academic/Research	1.6%;	2	Library
5.6%;	7	Association	3.2%;	4	Other

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Replies 125; Forms 127

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- Information and consulting firm
  - International Organization
  - Library (University)
  - non-profit trade promotion
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(29) 14. Do you work in your organization's library?

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45.5%;	56	Yes	54.5%;	67	No
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Replies 123; Forms 127

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(30) 15. What is your affiliation with the Census Bureau?

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60.2%;	74	None	3.3%;	4	Census Information Center
14.6%;	18	State Data Center	14.6%;	18	Other
7.3%;	9	Business/Industry Data Center			

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Replies 123; Forms 127

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- State Government Agency.
  - Richmond Public Library, BST Dept. 101 E. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23219
  - Former Advisory Committee member and CES researcher.
  - Federal User
  - Employed by US DOC/BXA
  - State Data Center Affiliation
  - Cooperator in disseminating permits authorized data
  - Census Liaison
  - Research
  - Provider of Business Data to the Census Bureau
  - Customer
  - Depository
  - Affiliate Data Center
  - DOC Staff
  - GPO Depository
  - BEA, U.S. Department of Commerce
  - Associate Data Center
  - Federal Depository Library
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(35) 20. May we contact you to follow up on this questionnaire?

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82.6%;	95	Yes	17.4%;	20	No
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Replies 115; Forms 127

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(36) Question 21. Remarks:

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- You should include questions on technology usage in your census questions (in the 10 year census).
- It would be nice to have all reports available in spreadsheets format. For any publication reports that contain large tables and data, mdb file format would be an ideal too.
- The computerized data is fine when know exactly which dat you want. It is not so good when you want to know what is available and related information; in this case the printed publication e.g. censu of Manufactures, is far superior.
- 1). It is important to be able to retrieve data in easy to use formats (spreadsheet or ascii)- "pdf" formats are convenient to print, but difficult to use. 2). Please see question 9. 3). We are concerned about the discontinuity in time series data that will occur with NAICS. The 1987 SIC change was a significant problem-NAICS will likely be much worse. Any help from Census (bridges, publication of data in both classifications) would be a great help to data users.
- I suport the move toward Internet data delivery because it should make data available faster and at a lower cost. the challenge is to make it easy for the widest variety of data users as possible to retrieve the data the need.

Example: I use County Business Patterns to track number of establishment for certain industries by state. I believe dat users on the Internet currently can select only one year at a time and one state at a time. the ability to put together summary tables based on selections would help a lot.

- A published paper version should always be made available for purchase to the public. Information being available on the internet is nice, yet it is a completely different animal than having a hard copy version of the information. An example: I can receive my new off the internet, but I still prefer to get

- my newspaper in the morning for reading at my leisure away from a computer.
- When is 1997 Census to be available? Please keep as much of the data in print as possible-- Thanks!
- Census bureau data is always helpful--the data you provide enhances our publication and enables readers to make informal business decisions.
- --But please ask for Deborah Foster.

Thank you.

- Your credibility is a great strength.
- We used to receive from state employment agency using worker comp data lists by geography MCD; by SIC; by name of employer--the number of employees. We were well aware this was sensitive data for competitive reasons of employer confidentiality. Unfortunately, someone at another agency apparently released some of this data to the "public" and now it is unavailable-- what is left is very inadequate, unsorted data--difficult to interpret. We can not do adequate community profiles by consolidated data any more. How can similar data be obtained?
- Being able to download from the web site has generally worked very well for us. The only troublesome aspect is that the page numbers of the PDF documents differ from the page numbers in their table of contents (e.g. - printing page 18 gets you page 12 of the document).

A big "thank you" to the Census specialists who have been most helpful and polite when we've called with questions.

- We serve a varied clientele (academic, business, government, and private citizens) and work across many subject. Census data are absolutely vital to us. Our biggest need is for more geographic area detail more frequently (state, county, place, if possible). Users often do not understand the 5 yr. gaps and lag time for the major Economic Surveys that offer such detail, much less the 10 yr. decennial cycle. The internet is a great help in speeding "publication", but we find access is not yet universal. We still download and print entire documents for guide reference and historical purposes. I am concerned about just how long the electronic media will remain accurate and usable as technology changes. How will the Bureau deal with these problems?
- Please contact ASAP: Bob Davidson, Gov't Information Service Section Palm Beach county Library System Service

3650 SUMMIT BLVD. 33406  
(561) 233-2600, ext. 164  
email Robert ID@PB.SEFLIN.ORG

- I believe this survey contains a lot of information to be used.
- Data validity in the NAICS project is one of our concerns. Has any provision been for cross checks of the data?
- I received the survey on August 7th--so was not able to return it in the time requested!

Our office is very interested in any information on the implementation of NAICS--as our researchers will be using it a great deal.

- We look forward to working with you on the upcoming Census.
- Tables which have no column headings and which one must consult separate documents are highly confusing.
- The web site is generally very helpful a lot of information--sometimes difficult to locate information wanted.
- I appreciate receiving this survey.
- Would be helpful if classes were offered in best techniques when seeking govt. data on the Web.

Location on Web that would state what media given U.S. Govt. was available in (papers, Internet, etc.)

- We have developed "Productivity Enhancement and Control (Peacon) Plan." This plan will solve 20 major economic problems of the U.S. and provide about \$10,000 to all wage earners earning up to \$200,000. It will double the minimum wage, reduce unemployment to 2% reduce poverty to 2% and provide health care benefits and solve other economic problems. Over 98% of the work force will benefit at the the cost of upper 2%, whose income will be reduced considerably.

- We love the Census Bureau! Clear publications indices and ease of search engines on the Internet site are very important to us. Also, choice of how to download data is good, not all users need or can use spreadsheet software.
- Will all Census data be available only via the Internet? My customers prefer printed format. Thank you.
- More documentation and instructions for obtaining data from gohper directories would be helpful.
- I like the fact that the Census Bureau Produces many of its documents in the .pdf format, these are easy to print, bind and archive in our library. However, what is even more important to our firm is the ability to manipulate the data, and easily bring it into a data base or spreadsheet. If I had to choose I would prefer the raw data to the printable format.

I might use more of the data listed in question now that I know it exists.

Figure 1: